

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 JUSE-00 NSAE-00

RSC-01 SNM-02 SY-04 TRSE-00 USIA-15 NSC-07 SCI-06

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R 241159Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3602

INFO DEA HQS WASHDC

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 8531

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, TH

SUBJ: NARCOTICS - MICUTA VISIT TO THAILAND

1. MICUTA, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF NARCOTIC DRUGS, IN A CALL ON THE CHARGE MAY 23 EXPRESSED WARM APPRECIATION FOR WHAT HE CALLED THE "UNPRECEDENTED" SUPPORT GIVEN BY THE MISSION TO THAI/UNPDAC. "THE BEST SUPPORT I HAVE SEEN IN 26 YEARS WITH THE UN", HE SAID (MICUTA IS NOT ONE TO UNDERSTATE HIS CASE). HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY IAN WILLIAMS AND RICHARD MANN OF UNPDAC. THE CHARGE RESPONDED THAT THE MISSION DOES WHAT IT CAN FOR THE UN PROGRAM BECAUSE OF ITS VIEW THAT THE UN HAS MADE PROGRESS IN REACHING HILLTRIBE VILLAGES UNMATCHED BY ANY OTHER PROGRAM IN THAILAND. MICUTA ALSO EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE INTEREST WHICH AMBASSADOR KINTNER PERSONALLY HAS SHOWN IN THE WORK OF THAI/UNPDAC AND SPECIFICALLY FOR THE HELP BEING PROVIDED BY THE US FOR THE SITE B WATER PROJECT AT CHANG KHIEU AND FOR RE-FORESTATION AT DOI SAM MUN AND ANG KHANG.

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2. ENFORCEMENT. MICUTA THEN EXPRESSED SERIOUS CONCERN OVER WHAT HE FELT WAS A FAILURE OF THE RTG NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM TO SUPPORT CROP SUBSTITUTION WORK. HE ASKED THAT THOSE IN THE US MISSION INVOLVED IN WORKING WITH THE THAI ON ENFORCEMENT DO WHAT THEY CAN TO PERSUADE THE THAI TO IMPROVE ENFORCEMENT OF THE BAN ON OPIUM CULTIVATION IN AREAS IN WHICH ALTERNATIVE CROPS ARE BEING INTRODUCED. MICUTA POINTED OUT THAT WHEREVER THE UN WORKS ON THE OPIUM PROBLEM, IT INSISTS THAT CROP SUBSTITUTION WORK BE ACCOMPANIED BY STRONG AND EFFECTIVE SUPPRESSION MEASURES. THE CHARGE SAID WE AGREED AND THAT WE HAVE ALREADY BEEN TALKING WITH SENIOR THAI OFFICIALS ALONG THESE LINES. HE URGED MICUTA TO RAISE THIS ALSO SO OUR APPROACHES WOULD REINFORCE ONE ANOTHER.

3. TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO CROP SUBSTITUTION. ON CROP SUBSTITUTION, MICUTA SAID THAT THE THAI/UNPDAC HAD, OVER THE LAST YEAR, ESTABLISHED THE BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDED IN THE FORM OF AN OPERATING CRO EXPERIMENT STATION AT CHANG KHIEH, AND THE PERMANENT SITING OF THREE THAI AGRICULTURAL CADRE IN EACH OF THE FIVE KEY VILLAGES, SUPPORTED BY CHINESE EXTENSION WORKERS. MICUTA SAID THAT NOW THE TIME HAD COME TO TAKE MORE RISKS IN THE EFFORT TO FIND MARKETABLE CROPS AS SUBSTITUTES FOR OPIUM. HE MENTIONED MUSHROOMS AS ONE POSSIBILITY AND ADDED THAT EVEN IF IN TEN EXPERIMENTS ONLY THREE PAID OFF, THIS WOULD BE A WORTHWHILE RATIO. THE UNPDAC WOULD EVEN BE WILLING TO UNDERWRITE THE ACTIVITY SO THE VILLAGERS WOULD NOT LOSE MONEY IF IT FAILED. WILLIAMS AND MANN POINTED OUT THAT SOME THAI CONCERNED WITH CROP SUBSTITUTION, INCLUDING THE KING AND PRINCE BHISADEJ, ARE OPPOSED TO SUBSIDIES OR GUARANTEED INCOME, BUT THIS COULD PERHAPS BE GOTTEN AROUND IF IT WAS CALLED A FEE FOR "EXPERIMENTATION".

4. MICUTA SAID THAT IN ORDER TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS, HE SAW THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL TECHNICAL PERSONNEL FROM TAIWAN SIMILAR TO THOSE WHO HAD SHOWN THEMSELVES SO VALUABLE ALREADY IN THE THAI/UNPDAC PROGRAM. MICUTA SAID THAT GIVEN THE FACT THAT THE UN COULD NOT HIRE DIRECTLY PEOPLE FROM THE GRC SINCE IT WAS NOT A MEMBER OF THE UN, HE HOPED THAT THE US COULD FIND SOME PROCEDURE UNDER WHICH IT COULD ACT AS A "COVER" FOR ADDITIONAL TECHNICIANS FROM TAIWAN WORKING WITH THE THAI/UNPDAC. IF THIS COULD BE ARRANGED, HE SAID THE UN WOULD BE WILLING TO FOOT THE BILL. THE CHARGE AGREED WITH MICUTA THAT IN THIS KIND OF WORK RISK TAKING IS ESSENTIAL

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THE CHARGE ALSO AGREED TO LOOK INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF FACILITATING IN SOME WAY THE PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL CHINESE TECHNICIANS.

5. MARKETING. MICUTA NOTED THAT THE THAI GOVERNMENT HAD NOW AGREED TO THE PROVISION OF UN MARKETING EXPERTS WHO WOULD BE BASED IN CHIAN MAI FOR PERIODS UP TO THREE MONTHS. THE CHARGE COMMENTED THAT THE US HAD ABANDONED ITS ORIGINAL INTENTION TO

PROVIDE HELP ON THE MARKETING PROBLEM WHEN IT LEARNED THAT THE RTG HAD GIVEN THE GO-AHEAD FOR UN SUPPORT IN THIS FIELD. HE EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF STRONG MARKETING SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGED MR. MICUTA TO GIVE THIS PROBLEM PARTICULAR ATTENTION IN GENEVA.

6. RTG SUB-COMMITTEE. MICUTA EXPRESSED SOME MISGIVINGS ABOUT WHAT HE FELT WERE WEAKNESSES OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE FOR UN AFFAIRS OF THE RTG CENTRAL NARCOTICS BOARD. HE SAID THAT THE SUB-COMMITTEE DID NOT APPEAR TO HAVE THE NECESSARY TOP LEVEL PARTICIPATION NEEDED FOR EFFECTIVE OPERATION WITHIN THE RTG BUREAUCRACY AND WONDERED IF IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE TO REFORM THIS COMMITTEE WITH A CABINET MINISTER AT ITS HEAD. THE CHARGE COMMENTED THAT THIS KIND OF PROBLEM IS FAMILIAR ENOUGH THROUGHOUT THE THAI ADMINISTRATION AND THAT THERE IS VERY LITTLE LATITUDE FOR A FOREIGNER TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION. HE ADVISED MICUTA THAT IT WAS MOST IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN GOOD PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE THAI INVOLVED AND SAID ANY EFFORTS TO UPGRADE THE LEVEL OF LEADERSHIP, WHICH WOULD INEVITABLY BE VIEWED AS LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN THE INCUMBENTS, WOULD BE A SERIOUS MISTAKE. MICUTA ULTIMATELY AGREED AND SAID THAT ACTUALLY FAR MORE PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE IN THAILAND THAN IN OTHER COUNTRIES WHICH DID HAVE CABINET-LEVEL LEADERSHIP FOR THEIR NARCOTICS LIAISON COMMITTEES.

7. EXPANSION OF PROGRAM. THE CHARGE ASKED MICUTA WHAT THE PROSPECTS WERE FOR EXPANDING THE THAI/UNPDAC SPHERE OF OPERATIONS BEYOND THE FIVE KEY VILLAGES AND 25 SATELLITE VILLAGES IN WHICH IT NOW WORKS INTO SOME OF THE OTHER 1,000 OPIUM PRODUCING VILLAGES IN THAILAND. MICUTA REACTED STRONGLY, STATED THAT THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE CROP SUBSTITUTION PROGRAM ARE FORMIDABLE AND CAN BE APPRECIATED ONLY BY SPENDING TIME ON THE GROUND GAINING PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS. HE SAID THAT IF THE UN WERE TO TAKE ON MORE VILLAGES AT THIS POINT, THIS WOULD DILUTE THE CONFIDENTIAL

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EFFECTS OF ITS WORK TO THE POINT WHERE IT WOULD LOSE EFFICIENCY.
COMMENT: WE AGREE. THE UNPDAC IS DOING A GOOD JOB, BUT IT
NEEDS TO GET A MORE SOLID BASE IN THE 30 VILLAGES NO
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Message Attributes

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